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Security Council

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New York

President:	Mr. Gayama	(Congo)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Indonesia	Mrs. Asmady
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa

Letter dated 14 August 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/496)

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07-49195 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like, at the outset of this meeting, to extend, on behalf of the Council, a warm welcome to Sir John Sawers, new Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations. I look forward to working closely with him in the work of the Council.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

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Letter dated 14 August 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/496)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Benin, Canada, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Namibia, Norway, Portugal, the Sudan, Switzerland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): Pursuant to the invitations extended by the Council under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ambassador Léo Mérorès, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, and Ambassador Leslie Kojo Christian, Acting Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in the consideration of the item.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw attention to document S/2007/496, which contains the text of a letter dated 14 August 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, at this meeting. I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: It is a pleasure to join the members of the Security Council today for this open debate on conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in Africa. Thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative.

I should like to officially welcome Ambassador Ripert of France and Ambassador Sawers of the United Kingdom, who have joined the Council and the United Nations as new Permanent Representatives. I am confident that their wide experience will make very valuable contributions to all the work of the United Nations, including that of the Council.

Since the time I assumed office as Secretary-General, I have made it clear that the resolution of Africa's most difficult conflicts is a top priority of my agenda. At the same time, a greater investment in prevention could save us considerable pain and expense — in Darfur, in Somalia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in northern Uganda, in Western Sahara and elsewhere.

We must devote more resources to conflict prevention. We must also strengthen our capacity for mediation. It is only through political settlements that conflicts can be resolved.

Conflicts have grown ever more complex. Sustainable solutions, therefore, require increasingly complex, multifaceted approaches. The United Nations system already contributes significantly to the prevention and resolution of armed conflict. Yet the

increasing complexity of the demands placed upon us has stretched the capacity of the Organization.

We need to develop new approaches. We need to address the underlying causes of conflicts. If we do not deal with the root causes of conflict — and offer sustainable solutions — we will be left with peacekeeping missions without end.

In 1998, my predecessor developed a plan to deal with these issues. He sought to identify the causes of conflict and to provide recommendations for the promotion of peace and development in Africa. But much has changed since then. Shortly, I will submit to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly my report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In it, I will recommend a comprehensive review of the 1998 recommendations. The review will cover the commitments made, the actions taken, the progress achieved and the lessons learned.

In the next few months, I will also present proposals for strengthening the capabilities of the Department of Political Affairs, with the goal of making more effective use of my good offices. I believe in engagement and dialogue, not confrontation. It is better to respond proactively, before a crisis fully develops. I count on the Council's support as we move forward in this endeavour.

Already, the Department has moved to create a standing team of mediation experts. It is establishing a comprehensive data bank of peace agreements and lessons learned on peacekeeping. It is undertaking proactive mediation efforts in such places as the Sudan and northern Uganda.

Regional organizations can contribute. Again, I point to the Sudan, where the United Nations is working with the African Union. The goal is to strengthen our collective capacities to address Africa's peace and security challenges. With the Council's adoption of resolution 1769 (2007) on Darfur, we have entered a new era in United Nations-African Union cooperation. The African Union-United Nations hybrid operation is an unprecedented undertaking and it reflects the international community's commitment to end the suffering in Darfur. The United Nations and the African Union are also collaborating closely in pushing forward the political process in Darfur. Again, peacekeeping is only a start; there must be a political solution, but that has taken too long. The tragedy of Darfur reminds us how much more needs to be done before we complete our transformation from a culture of reaction to one of effective prevention.

In that regard, I would like to inform you that I am going to visit the Sudan in early September, from 3 to 6 September. I want to go and see for myself the very difficult conditions under which the forces will operate. I also want to know first-hand the plight of those they seek to help.

Let me emphasize from the outset that this is not a trip about breakthroughs; rather the visit is about consolidating the progress to lay the groundwork for forward movement. In Juba, I plan to underscore the commitment of the United Nations to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and the South, the cornerstone of peace in the Sudan. I also wish to show solidarity with colleagues who are working under very difficult conditions in the field.

In today's world, prevention must go beyond mere diplomacy. The most difficult conflicts occur when a variety of factors come together; for example, when tensions over issues of identity within a community are combined with unequal access to political and economic resources. Africa is particularly affected by those problems, perhaps because of the manner in which its colonial borders were drawn up.

In order to prevent or resolve such conflicts, we must promote tolerance of diversity within societies. The solutions should be as inclusive and representative as possible. That means providing advice on constitutional frameworks. It means promoting human rights and the rule of law, helping to organize elections and building democratic institutions. It means training police and pursuing efforts to stop weapons smuggling. The United Nations is assisting in all those areas, through its own programmes and through support to regional organizations like the African Union.

Conflict prevention and sustainable development reinforce each other. That is why it is crucial that we make progress in our race to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. That means reinforcing and accelerating our efforts to reduce extreme poverty, combat disease, promote universal primary education, ensure environmental sustainability and advance gender equality. Empowering women is not only a means to achieving lasting development, it is also critical to the promotion of peace and security, as

underlined in resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

It is important to note that we are on track to realize the Millennium Development Goals in most developing countries — but not in Africa. Why? We need fresh thinking and new approaches to lifting our poorest nations out of poverty. Part of that means dealing with the conflicts and problems of governance that affect so many African countries.

Equally crucial is the need to build peace in countries emerging from conflict — Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Liberia. In those and other fragile post-conflict countries, peacebuilding is in fact prevention, since it is designed to prevent a relapse into war. We are working with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Commission to support reconciliation and confidence-building, end impunity and consolidate the peace.

By some estimates, there has been a 40 per cent decline in armed conflict around the world since the 1990s. Recent research credits expanded United Nations peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict prevention activities as a major factor behind this decline. That is encouraging. But, it is not good enough. Violent conflicts continue to inflict immense suffering on countless people, mostly civilians around the world. For those victims and for the sake of future generations, we have an obligation to take more seriously the challenge of prevention. There must be sustained international political will to reinforce preventive action in its broadest sense. And there must be adequate resources invested for the diverse and complex tasks that prevention entails.

I trust you will have a fruitful debate on this most crucial issue, in which the Council has an essential role to play.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to Mr. Léo Mérorès, Permanent Representative of Haiti, speaking on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure to deliver, on behalf of Her Excellency Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, President of the General Assembly, the following statement.

"The Security Council meets today to convene a thematic debate on its role in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa. I am pleased to participate in today's debate in my capacity as President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, which is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. I would like to thank Mr. Pascal Gayama, the President of the Council for the month of August, for his invitation to address the Council today.

"At the 2005 World Summit, when heads of State and Government gathered in New York, they stressed the importance of the prevention of armed conflicts and solemnly renewed their commitment to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations in that regard.

"They also stressed the need for the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General to coordinate their activities within their respective Charter mandates. I am convinced that there is still room for progress to enhance that coordination and cooperation.

"The prevention of armed conflict is one of the principal purposes of the United Nations and lies at the centre of many of the Organization's efforts. The issue has been included as a specific item on the agenda of the General Assembly in 2002 and every session since — an indication of the increasing perception of the concept's importance.

"By establishing the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, the General Assembly took an important step forward in the field of conflict prevention. The efforts of the Commission constitute an essential component in solidifying peace and preventing relapse into conflicts. But that is not enough. We need to reinforce the mediation and good offices capabilities of the United Nations system in its entirety. We should strive to provide the necessary tools for the United Nations to play that crucial role, while fully respecting the sovereignty of all Member States.

"Just as conflict prevention is a multidimensional task involving a set of political, humanitarian, development and other measures

tailored to each specific context, a successful preventive strategy is dependent upon the cooperation of many different actors, including Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors.

"However, in the final analysis, it is up to each State to take responsibility to prevent conflicts. In his 2006 report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891), the Secretary-General remarked that 'A culture of prevention is beginning to take hold at the United Nations' but that 'An unacceptable gap still remains between rhetoric and reality'. The most important priority is, then, to make conflict prevention an operational reality.

"In conclusion, I would like express the hope that cooperation and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations will intensify in this crucial domain, which remains at the heart of the goals of our Organization."

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian, Acting Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Christian: On behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission, I wish to thank the President of the Security Council for the invitation and will make the following statement in my capacity as Acting Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

First, I wish to commend the delegation of the Republic of the Congo for organizing this debate. We welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and his briefing.

In recognition of the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to international peacebuilding efforts, the Security Council and the General Assembly passed concurrent resolutions to give effect to the recommendation made in the Outcome Document of the World Summit of 2005 (General Assembly resolution 60/1) on the need for a peacebuilding commission to serve as an institutional mechanism dedicated to addressing the particular challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict. The ultimate goal of the Peacebuilding Commission, as envisaged by its founding resolutions, is to help countries emerging from conflict to lay the foundations for their post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, to enable them to experience sustainable peace and development, thereby preventing them from relapsing into violence.

Besides the expert bodies and the studies undertaken under the auspices of the Secretary-General over the past years, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the efforts of the Security Council's ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution over the past ten years. Those efforts contributed to the groundwork for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission looks forward to benefiting from the rich storehouse of innovation vested in this body.

It is especially relevant that today's open debate is geared towards Africa, as the Commission, during its first year of operations, has so far focused its attention on two African countries — Burundi and Sierra Leone. One of the Commission's key accomplishments has been to maintain international attention on the peacebuilding efforts in those two countries. This has, in turn, instilled a greater sense of accountability and responsibility among the national and local actors on the ground to ensure long-term peace.

Furthermore, with the full support of the Governments in those countries, the Commission has engaged with relevant United Nations and non-United Nations actors involved in peacebuilding there to support the Governments' development of integrated peacebuilding strategies. It is hoped that international efforts will be more coherent and that enhanced resources can be mobilized around those strategies.

In addition, by virtue of the Commission's consideration of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Secretary-General announced earlier this year that he would allocate funding envelopes of $35 million to each, from the Peacebuilding Fund, for those countries' peacebuilding priorities.

We wish to welcome the results of the first round of elections in Sierra Leone and the free and transparent manner in which they were conducted. We wish the people of Sierra Leone well as they go to the second and final round of the polls, so that the gains made so far in the post-conflict recovery in collaboration with the Peacebuilding Commission will be consolidated.

The Commission also has an important role to play in contributing to the development of comprehensive strategic visions for United Nations actions in conflict prevention and resolution by ensuring that such strategies take peacebuilding priorities into consideration. In that way, conflict prevention and resolution efforts can help to foresee and forestall the potential for relapse into conflict.

As mandated, the Commission is working to improve the coordination among all relevant actors, both inside and outside the United Nations, in order to focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to bring those actors together to marshal resources for peacebuilding. Indeed, peacebuilding is an integral part of improving the United Nations capacity for conflict prevention and resolution, and we hope that the Commission will be able to significantly enhance the international community's efforts to prevent countries from lapsing or relapsing into conflict, as envisioned in its founding resolutions.

In this regard, it will be important to increase cooperation and engagement between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Indeed, one of the issues we hope to address in the coming year is how the Commission can best engage with the Security Council, as well as with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including in developing the most appropriate mechanisms for providing advice as necessary and in accordance with its founding resolutions. It may be useful to have regular interaction between the Commission and the Council, including by participating in meetings such as this open debate. The open debate organized by the Security Council earlier this year, during the presidency of the Russian delegation, demonstrated the Council's commitment to finding ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Commission's first annual report (S/2007/458), to be debated during the General Assembly session and also to be submitted to the Security Council for review in the course of this year, highlights some of the Commission's challenges and achievements during its first year of existence. It is our hope that the contents of the report will provide food for thought in fine-tuning the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing in the Chamber and to deliver a condensed version when speaking.

Mr. Suescum (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before starting, I would like to welcome the Secretary-General to this Chamber. I would also like to welcome Ambassador Mérorès, sitting in for the President of the General Assembly, and Ambassador Christian as Acting Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. Welcome to all. If you permit me, Mr. President, I would also like to thank you for taking the initiative to organize this important debate.

The responsibility for resolving disputes and preventing a conflict rests, as a founding principle of this Organization, in the first place with the States party to a conflict. Achieving peace, however, depends to a large extent on our commitment to the architecture of collective security that we have brought together in the United Nations. This Council and the Assembly should redouble efforts to facilitate the success of the measures provided for under Chapter VI of the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes, given the human consequences inherent in any conflict.

Contrary to a very well-known quote, conflicts are not diplomacy by other means. On the contrary, they are the result of the failure of diplomacy or of dialogue that was undertaken without due seriousness. The increase in the number of peace missions is a troubling indicator of an increasing number of such failures. Both the General Assembly and the Council can and should strengthen mechanisms for the prevention and peaceful solution of conflict.

In the case of Africa, systematic cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union is on the agenda. The role provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter for regional arrangements has been strengthened by recent agreements between these two organizations. These agreements bear witness to the emergence in the United Nations of a culture of prevention that has given rise to new instruments and

mechanisms. However, a divide still exists between aspirations and reality.

As the Secretary-General said today, and as his report (S/2001/574) of 7 June 2001 on the prevention of armed conflict indicates,

> "Preventive action should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of a conflict cycle in order to be most effective. One of the principal aims of preventive action should be to address the deep-rooted socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and other structural causes that often underlie the immediate political symptoms of conflicts." (*S/2001/574, executive summary*)

It is unfortunate that the efforts of the Security Council tend initially to address root causes during the post-conflict period, whether through integrated missions or the Peacebuilding Commission. The time has come to consider the desirability of extending, redesigning or commingling existing mechanisms to step up the use of the Council's preventive efforts.

Lastly, I should like, in a general way, to touch upon some particularly important factors in preventing conflict in Africa.

It is important to redouble efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000). Without concrete efforts to increase the participation of women as stakeholders in, and beneficiaries of, the prevention of conflict, we diminish the value of the good offices of a sector of the population that, as often the primary victims of the ravages of violence, have a great deal of experience to bring to bear in preventing violence.

Justice is also an essential component of peace, reconciliation and the prevention of conflict. We would therefore emphasize the need for Governments and political actors to strengthen and respect the institutions needed to ensure the rule of law, as well as to cooperate fully with the work of international tribunals.

In conclusion, in Africa in particular, international cooperation is essential in combating and controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to join in the welcoming words addressed to our guests today, namely, the Secretary-General and the Ambassadors of Haiti and Ghana, who are here representing the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission, respectively. I also wish to welcome the new representatives of France and the United Kingdom.

As we know, African issues comprise a significant part of our agenda. We therefore welcome the President's initiative to once again place before the Security Council the issue of its relationship with Africa, especially as regards the prevention and resolution of conflicts. I should like to orient our discussion today towards the root causes of conflicts and the tools at the disposal of the Security Council to address and prevent them.

Poverty and ethnic, social, economic and religious exclusion are at the primary causes of violence, instability and the disintegration of African States. Economic dysfunction, disputes over natural resources — intensified by social and cultural differences — and corruption in the management of public affairs have served to wear away at the fabric of societies and to undermine the capacity of States to provide basic services and exercise authority over their territory. In many societies that has led to violent civil conflicts whose devastating results we are all aware of.

Peru therefore believes that effective preventive efforts in Africa can only be sustained through ongoing attention to the most basic needs of African populations and the long-term sustainability of the continent's economies. It is essential that Africa achieve the Millennium Development Goals and begin to benefit from integration into the global economy. African Governments have the primary responsibility to ensure that. International financial institutions and major donor countries also face the challenge and responsibility of providing African countries with consistent and effective assistance. For its part, the Security Council should bear in mind the underlying causes of conflict, to which I have referred, in the efforts it undertakes, especially with regard to peacekeeping operations.

In addition to the powers conferred upon the Security Council by the Charter, the Council also has at its disposal numerous tools to ensure the effectiveness of its capacity to prevent conflict. Resolution 1625 (2005) details those tools, which range from early warnings provided to the Council by the Secretary-General and follow-up to his preventive diplomatic initiatives to the importance of considering effective

broad-based prevention strategies that not only involve the security sector but also the economic, social, humanitarian, governmental and human rights spheres in countries affected by crises. We should also underscore the need to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations to those ends.

On the operational level, a contribution can be made by having programmes, funds and agencies of the system work together with the organs that establish their mandates in the drafting and implementation of policies. Peacekeeping operations and ad hoc offices, such as those set up in Liberia and Sierra Leone to consolidate peace, can therefore provide useful lessons for the African continent. Other examples of such a way of doing things can be found in the conflict mediation mechanism established by the Department of Political Affairs, as well as in various other early-warning instruments, including the establishment of the post of Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

Those instruments should not lead us to forget that, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations and as Peru has reiterated on various occasions, regional agreements should constitute some of the most effective tools at the disposal of the Security Council in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In that regard, we appreciate the fact that the African Union and, in particular, its Peace and Security Council have established their relevance and value. That shows that African countries have taken the lead in resolving their problems. In addition to its role in attempting to ensure that the devastating conflict in Darfur comes to an end, we can also refer to such other contributions by African countries in recent months as the initiative led by the former President of Mozambique to reach agreements between Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army and the efforts by the council of elders in the recent elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other African subregional mechanisms have also taken an active part in these tasks. A recent case in point was the mediation provided by the President of Burkina Faso in his capacity as the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States with regard to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreements.

The resolution of conflict — as well as its prevention — also require practical measures to limit access to the resources that make it possible for armed violence to take root in societies in conflict. In that regard, it is necessary that we combat more resolutely the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which finances armed movements, by implementing certification instruments with regard to various products such as the Kimberly Process for diamonds.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons — which was the subject of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/24) adopted this past June — is another of the many problems that must be addressed. We trust that that statement will promote decisive efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking and lead to the implementation of an internationally binding instrument to end the prevailing situation of impunity and evasion of responsibility.

As is clear, the necessary mandates and tools exist to prevent conflicts and contribute to resolving them. Nevertheless, there is also a need for concrete and effective measures that address both the root problems that lead to conflicts, as well as for efforts to tackle the conflicts once they break out or prevent or minimize the possibility that conflicts evolve into widespread violence. Those are the challenges that must be addressed in Africa in order to overcome current conflicts and, above all, save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): We thank the Congolese presidency for initiating this important and timely debate, and welcome the presence of the Secretary-General.

Earlier this month, this Council authorized the largest peacekeeping mission ever. We are in the midst of preparations to launch a multidimensional international presence in Chad and the Central African Republic. The international community has been struggling to accumulate the resources necessary for an adequate reaction to the crisis in Somalia. Meanwhile, there are a number of peacekeeping missions deployed worldwide, costing billions of United States dollars each year. Many of these costs could have been spared, if there had been an effective conflict prevention mechanism.

Nevertheless, all the expenses of the United Nations are negligible compared to the loss of human life, suffering and destruction that could have been averted, at least partially, if there had been a working system of conflict prevention. We therefore fully support all the efforts aimed, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, at moving from the culture of

reaction to the culture of prevention within the United Nations system.

Resolution 1625 (2005) set up an ambitious agenda that has seen partial implementation. We therefore believe that conflict prevention should be given further serious consideration during the current reforms of the United Nations system in general and the Secretariat in particular. This does not necessarily imply establishing new institutions or introducing new bureaucratic procedures. The United Nations system should, however, pay much more attention in its functioning to different aspects of conflict prevention. The Council has recently shown leadership in that regard by discussing various issues related to conflict prevention, such as security sector reform, energy security and climate change, and natural resources and conflict.

For our part, we are glad to inform the Council that the debate on security sector reform that took place in February will have a follow-up in Africa later this year. A regional seminar on security sector reform in Africa, co-organized by South Africa and Slovakia, will take place in Cape Town in November.

We believe that such thematic debates should become an integral part of the deliberations of other United Nations bodies as well. In addition, on a more operational basis, further steps should be taken to achieve more cohesion and cooperation between the different parts of the United Nations in the fields of risk assessment, best practices and policy planning. Mr. Secretary-General, we believe we can rely on your leadership in this regard in the context of the reform of the Secretariat and efforts for system-wide coherence.

In addition, there is clearly a need to improve the cooperation of the United Nations with regional and subregional organizations, which can provide invaluable input and early warning through their expertise and knowledge of the actual situation on the ground. On the other hand, the input of the regional organizations will usually be indispensable in the mediation efforts aimed at the prevention of conflicts.

Last but not least, all these efforts cannot substitute for the leadership and work done by national authorities, who hold the primary responsibility for conflict prevention. The 2005 World Summit codified the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility lies with each individual State and entails the prevention of such crimes through appropriate and necessary means.

Slovakia strongly believes that this responsibility can be best fulfilled though the introduction and implementation of policies that have proven effective in this regard in many countries, including our own. These policies imply strict adherence to and implementation and enforcement of internationally recognized human rights standards and democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance, including the sound management of national wealth, and security sector reform. The implementation of these principles has helped make our continent stable and secure. We believe in the universal applicability of these principles, and we are therefore convinced that they will help Africa find the path to peace and stability, just as they helped Europe.

Finally, the responsibility to protect also implies that, when national capacities and the ability to face extensive potential threats are inadequate, the responsibility to identify possible risks and ask for the assistance of the United Nations and the international community lies primarily with the national authorities.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): The unprecedented surge in United Nations commitments in the field of peacekeeping — rightly or wrongly perceived as having been undertaken with scant attention to sustainability — makes today's reflections on the issue of conflict prevention more timely than ever. Italy is very grateful to the Congolese presidency for promoting this reflection, both today and through the chairmanship of the working group, and welcomes the participation of the Secretary-General in this debate.

Italy fully endorses the statement that will be made by the Portuguese presidency of the European Union, and wishes to make some additional observations in our national capacity.

There are objective limits to the Council's action in the field of prevention, and they are due to the fact that the Council's agenda is dominated by current events, if not emergencies. The Council is, to use an expression that has often been heard in this chamber, "the fireman who puts out crises".

Having said this, there are also many things that the Council can do to contribute to collective efforts at conflict prevention.

First, it can set appropriate guidelines for its action. The Council's action to implement resolution 1625 (2005) should be built on the recognition that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention resides with Member States. The experience of the African continent demonstrates that the absolute prerequisite for any change is the political will of national actors, especially in countries emerging from conflicts. The Council should encourage and support the efforts of national actors.

The Council's action should also stem from a clear partnership of the United Nations with the regional and subregional organizations that operate within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and from an active promotion of the principle of regional ownership. As we see it, this promotion should strive for a balanced development of the capacities of regional and subregional bodies. In this light, we see particular potential in paragraph 7 of the joint communiqué signed at the end of our mission to Addis Ababa, which places our partnership with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in a comprehensive framework, ranging from prevention to peacebuilding and reconstruction. The communiqué rightly underlines the strategic value of implementing of the framework for the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union.

In this connection, we commend recent, innovative examples of cooperation with the Africa Union, notably the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Council's decision to deploy a hybrid operation in Darfur.

Second, conflict prevention should be a collective effort of the whole United Nations system, and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the General Assembly for having laid the foundations for our common work, particularly through its resolution 57/337. I also wish to welcome here the participation of the presidencies of the General Assembly and of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, represented by Mr. Mérorès and Mr. Christian.

As for the specific role of the United Nations Secretariat, Italy thinks that the Council should, first and foremost, work closely with the Secretary-General, who needs to feel the full weight and convinced support of all the members of the Council in promoting United Nations preventive diplomacy.

Resolution 1625 (2005) was born of the awareness that the contribution of the United Nations to operative conflict prevention lies essentially in the hands of the Secretary-General. The current Secretary-General and his predecessor have repeatedly drawn attention to the contradiction between the awareness of the need to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity for mediation and early warning, which was expressed at the highest level at the 2005 World Summit, and the lack of sufficient resources. Italy supports the view that the resources available to the Secretariat, particularly the Department of Political Affairs, be commensurate with their actual needs. As regards those needs, we believe that particular importance should be attached to strengthening political missions operating in crisis situations, in support of existing political processes. The most recent resolution on Somalia has given us an excellent example of the recognition of this priority. In our view, based on the positive experience of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in West Africa, we think the Security Council should consider applying more widely a subregional approach to the root causes of instability, which often go beyond national borders.

Thirdly, we should like to underscore the importance of exploiting the full potential of the instruments already available to the Security Council to assist in promoting effective prevention. I refer, in the first instance, to the Peacebuilding Commission, but also to the United Nations Integrated Offices and to the definition of peacekeeping operations mandates by this Council.

The effectiveness of our collective efforts is undermined by artificial divisions within the United Nations family. If we are to overcome these divisions, a wider sense of ownership of United Nations activities in the field of conflict prevention is needed. Regular interaction between the wider membership and the Secretariat, particularly on issues pertaining to the long-term prevention of conflicts, should be envisioned as a necessary complement to the existing dialogue between the Department of Political Affairs and the Security Council. Such interaction would be critical in strengthening confidence and cooperation among the various United Nations bodies involved in conflict prevention, giving the Secretariat a stronger and more

credible mandate to carry on its activities on the ground.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me express my country's confidence that today's debate and its follow-up will contribute, from the Security Council perspective, to the elaboration of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy, based on the concurrent efforts of all United Nations bodies.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): The United States would like to thank the Republic of Congo for raising the important issue of the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in Africa. We agree with you, Mr. Secretary-General, and with you, Mr. President, that the United Nations, and more particularly this Council, can and must enhance its capacity to prevent conflict, particularly on the continent of Africa.

For the United Nations to be more effective in preventing conflict in Africa, the Security Council must work more cooperatively and more efficiently with regional and subregional organizations. In this regard, the United States joins other members of this Council in welcoming the provisions of the joint communiqué of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council that was issued in June 2007 and that calls for a stronger relationship between the two bodies.

According to the World Bank, 16 of the world's 20 poorest countries have suffered a major war in the past 15 years. On average, four of every ten countries coming out of war relapse to conflict in the first five years of peace. My Government supports conflict prevention and conflict resolution in Africa through a variety of bilateral and multilateral programmes.

As announced at the Group of Eight meeting in 2004, the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) was created to address the disparity between the persistent demand for trained peacekeeping forces and their inadequate availability, especially for missions in Africa. In 2005, GPOI trained and equipped 27,000 military personnel from 37 countries to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations. That number is expected to increase to 75,000 by the end of the year. The United States is supporting four of the eleven GPOI Peace Operations Training Centres in Africa — in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, and Nigeria.

The Transportation and Logistics Support Arrangement (TLSA) of the GPOI contributed $11.5 million in 2005-2006, $5 million of which went to construct portions of 34 base camps in Darfur. In 2007, the United States has obligated $32 million to TLSA to support initiatives including $12 million in equipment to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), $6.8 million for the training and equipping of Ugandan troops supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and $6 million to support Nigerian deployment to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS).

GPOI's predecessor, the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme provided training and non-lethal equipment to over 52,000 peacekeepers from African partner militaries through July 2007. These partners are now contributing, or have contributed, to a number of African peacekeeping operations.

Understanding that economic development is a crucial component of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, the United States Congress passed the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on 18 May 2000. This Act offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. Thirty-eight of the 48 sub-Saharan States are now eligible for African Growth and Opportunity Act support. As a result, two-way trade between the United States and sub-Saharan African countries increased by 17 per cent in 2006 alone, reaching almost $71.3 billion, with both United States exports to and, perhaps more importantly, United States imports from the region growing.

In 2004, President Bush created the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (CRS) to harness the full breadth of United States skills and resources to transform conflict.

As this partial list makes clear, we do have important programmes in place. What we clearly need now is more effective coordination between our efforts, other Governments' efforts, Security Council efforts, and the efforts of the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations. With such enhanced coordination, we would all be better positioned to help prevent conflict before it starts and to assist States emerging from conflict so the violence of the past is not repeated.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): It is an honour to represent the United Kingdom in this Council and at the United Nations, and I am grateful to you, Sir, for your kind words of welcome and for those from the Secretary-General, whose presence is very welcome here today.

I also wish to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your choice of conflict prevention for this debate. We welcome the presidential statement to be adopted which I hope will be adopted at the close of this meeting and I also endorse the statement to be given by the European Union presidency later in this debate.

The Charter of the United Nations begins with an expression of our collective determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ...". But in the six decades since the adoption of the Charter, our record has been mixed.

In Western Europe, torn apart by war twice in the first half of the last century, peace and cooperation are now, thankfully, the norm. But Africa, the focus of our discussion today, has experienced more conflict in recent decades than any other continent. We have witnessed signs of hope — the ending of some appalling conflicts in recent years in West and Central Africa, and the development of the African Union, as a political and security entity, a sign of African common purpose. But across the continent, the memories of war and the human and material cost of conflict are all too obvious.

In preparing to take up this job, I have been to the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Tanzania. I have seen the international effort to help countries in conflict, or deal with conflict on their borders. A huge effort is being made, led by the United Nations, and there are many good stories to tell. I would commend, Mr. Secretary-General, your words on Sudan, and warmly welcome your visit there next week to push forward our peace efforts in that country.

My Government welcomes the commitment of African nations to greater efforts to prevent conflicts breaking out in the first place, as well as to their resolution. The solving of the long-running dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula is a model. We need more such successes.

I would emphasize two landmarks in the last two years, on which we need to build. The first was the adoption of resolution 1625 (2005) by the Security Council Summit meeting.

This ambitious text called for regular monitoring of regions at risk of conflict and set out the range of factors that need to be part of a comprehensive approach: not just security and political issues, but economic, social and humanitarian factors and issues of governance and human rights. It stressed also the importance of a regional approach.

The second landmark — as highlighted by our Italian and United States colleagues — was the agreement in June this year between this Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, setting out our joint commitment to a stronger and more structured relationship, including on conflict prevention.

So we have the institutional framework and we have the declared political will to improve our efforts on conflict prevention. I pay tribute to the work of your delegation, Mr. President, in leading the Council's working group on this issue.

How, practically, can we make progress with preventing conflict? I think there are three areas of activity.

First, we need to be engaged and active long before problems turn into conflicts. This means the Council being prepared to discuss regions and countries struggling with problems and, working in partnership with the Secretary-General, helping to prevent them turning into armed conflict, rather than just confronting wars once they have started, as we tend to do today. It requires more capacity in the Secretariat, as called for at the World Summit, for political analysis and conflict assessment, and a more joined-up approach across the United Nations system so that we have early warning of a worsening problem. It also means more regular briefings to the Council by the Secretariat on the prevention priorities of the day.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the partnership for prevention between the Council and regional and subregional organizations, particularly those in Africa. We need to support African efforts as the African Union (AU) builds its own systems and decision-making capacity, through sharing best practice and know-how. We should make full use of the annual

meetings between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council to discuss prevention priorities, perhaps making conflict prevention a standing item on their agenda. Mediation efforts by the United Nations and the AU should be coordinated. Our envoys should work together, as Jan Eliasson and Salim Salim are doing in Darfur.

Thirdly, there is the wider dimension, as the Secretary-General has eloquently set out in his introductory remarks. We all agreed in 2005 that development, security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

For sustained peace, we need to re-energize the world's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as my Prime Minister called for here on 31 July. We need to be more effective in addressing human rights abuses and social exclusion, which are often at the root of conflict, and in ensuring that those who perpetrate serious violations of international humanitarian law are held to account. How can countries move on from past conflicts without justice, restitution and, ultimately, reconciliation?

And we need to encourage good governance and fuller political participation, not just in Africa but in the Middle East and elsewhere. Progress on all these fronts will promote peaceful coexistence and reconciliation, both between countries and within them. My Government is committed to playing its part, and I personally will do everything that I can over my time on this Council to make progress towards these goals.

Mr. Yankey (Ghana): We too are pleased to welcome the Secretary-General and Ambassador Léo Mérorès, who is representing the General Assembly. We thank them for their statements. We further wish to commend the delegation of the Republic of the Congo for organizing the debate on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, which, in the view of my delegation, remains a crucial challenge in the agenda for peace in Africa. We also thank the Congolese delegation for drawing up a concept paper that is very forward-looking in terms of its overall posture, not only towards the question of peace but also by emphasizing the need to build on existing initiatives and institutional mechanisms in the furtherance of peace on our continent.

It is important to stress that African States are increasingly taking ownership of the process of addressing the peace and conflict issues that affect them. Over the past decade, there has been significant progress in strengthening peace and security in Africa through peace processes in Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Mali, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as in building Africa's own capacity to manage conflicts through the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Through the framework of the African security architecture, in particular the Peace and Security Council, the AU has established an integrated and a comprehensive mechanism that provides early warning on potentially explosive situations.

In addition, the Constitutive Act of the African Union binds its members to a number of democratic principles, including the rejection of unconstitutional change of government. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is another instrument to address governance issues identified as being among the major root causes of most of the conflicts in Africa. These and other initiatives clearly demonstrate a determination and commitment of African countries to resort to intra-African solutions in dealing with crisis in the region.

These developments are consistent with the position outlined by the Secretary-General in his report in document A/60/891, where it is correctly observed that the multilayered nature of effective preventive action and crisis management means no State or organization can act alone.

Although the African Union is determined to play a leading role in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, it seeks to do so in close partnership with the United Nations in particular and the world community generally. This is evident in the numerous initiatives undertaken by both the African countries themselves and by non-African organizations, including bilateral partners, to strengthen cooperation with the AU and other, subregional, organizations. The most notable initiative is the adoption in 2005 of the United Nations Ten-year Capacity-building Programme for the African Union, followed last year by the Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation. Both the Programme and Declaration reflect our joint commitment to find more effective ways to advance peace and security in Africa. The United Nations is also working with the AU to develop a standby force capable of rapid deployment.

Recently, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council, meeting in Addis Ababa, committed themselves to the development of a stronger and more structured relationship in the areas of the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and peacekeeping and peacebuilding. With this new framework of cooperation, a new dynamism is expected in the overall relations between the two organizations.

The G-8 African Action Plan, among other objectives, also seeks to support efforts by African countries and the United Nations to better regulate the activities of arms brokers and traffickers and to eliminate the flow of illicit weapons to and within Africa. Bilateral partners like the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United States and others have all contributed in diverse ways to support Africa and enhance its capacities to deal with the complex conflicts afflicting the continent.

The ultimate objective in all these efforts, I believe, is to develop a new peace and security architecture that can contribute to preventing conflict and maintain durable peace on the continent. But as the Secretary-General's report acknowledges, an unacceptable gap still remains between rhetoric and reality in the area of conflict prevention, and that too often the international community spends vast sums of money to fight fires that could have been extinguished through preventive actions. A fraction of the $18 billion mentioned in the Secretary-General's report could have been expended on efficient and effective prevention action.

The observation by the Secretary-General, coupled with the myriad of conflict-resolution strategies tried out over the years, should prompt us to question why our efforts have not had the desired impact. Part of the answer lies with lack of political will and part with lack of commitment to address the root causes of conflicts.

For the Security Council to define its role properly, as well as to enhance its capacity to contribute meaningfully towards conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, it is imperative that we pay careful attention to the underlying causes of these conflicts in the first place. Related to this issue is the question of what problems should be and should not be discussed by the Council.

It is widely acknowledged that most armed conflicts in Africa arise out of failures in governance and chronic economic vulnerability and their destabilizing impact on the process of democratization, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Hence, the issues of sustainable development and transparency and accountability in public institutions are central not only to consolidating peace and stability, but also to preventing tension from turning into violence.

The Security Council, as the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must of necessity be interested in these issues as ones of strategic importance to its mandate. The time has come, therefore, for the Council to redefine its relationship with the other organs of the United Nations bearing direct responsibility for some of the problems that account for the proliferation of conflicts in Africa.

On the other hand, my delegation believes that the Council could exercise the necessary discretion, albeit prudently, when it becomes necessary to consider looming threats to peace in exceptional circumstances. The Council must equally be mindful of emergent challenges — especially in the area of the environment — that have far-reaching implications for international peace and security in the foreseeable future.

In all these efforts, African Governments owe their countries and citizens a responsibility to protect lives and property. They must demonstrate the political will and, in collaboration with civil society, the private sector and the international community, fulfil their share of the responsibilities.

In conclusion, we must accept that we are all in this together. Instability in Africa has global implications, as it can create zones of lawlessness, which can be exploited by criminals and terrorists. Without increased investment in conflict prevention, Africa will not achieve the rapid acceleration in development that its people seek. Investing in development is itself an investment in peace and security.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We wish at the outset to express our appreciation to the Congolese presidency for organizing this important meeting. We also wish to welcome the Secretary-General and to thank him for his unwavering support for Africa. We believe that his trip to the Sudan comes at just the right

time, when we need a push to make sure that the people of Darfur are not forgotten. In addition, we welcome Ambassador Mérorès, representing the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and Ambassador Christian in his other incarnation, representing the Peacebuilding Commission.

This debate comes after the recent visit by the United Nations Security Council to Addis Ababa to consult with the African Union on common strategies to address ongoing conflicts in Africa. During the historic working session between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, concrete suggestions were made about developing synergies in the area of conflict prevention and peacekeeping at the institutional and operational levels. Our deliberations today can only further strengthen the response of the international community to making peace sustainable in Africa and, indeed, elsewhere in the world.

Conflict prevention cannot be addressed in isolation. Matters of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping are linked inextricably to peace and stability, good governance and the deepening of democracy, and all can contribute to concrete efforts towards achieving sustainable social and economic development.

Conflicts in one country have the potential to destabilize neighbouring countries, with devastating consequences. It is therefore critical to build on national processes and to implement regional strategies to combat such challenges as transnational crime, drug and human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms. South Africa has always welcomed efforts by national Governments, the African Union and the United Nations to address challenges of conflict prevention in a meaningful manner. It is important that strategies dealing with conflict prevention continue to be further developed and harnessed in order to produce tangible and visible results. In other words, there can be no peace without sustainable development, democracy and the protection of fundamental human rights.

Nearly a decade ago, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan published a comprehensive report on the causes of conflict and the pro motion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report stressed, among other reasons, the following factors contributing to instability in the African continent: historical legacies — that is, colonial frontiers, political legacies and commercial relations established under colonial rule; support for authoritarian regimes during the Cold War era; internal factors such as the nature of power-sharing and the politicization of ethnicity; and external factors — that is, economic interest, competition for resources, the destabilization of neighbouring States and the effects of war economies. The former Secretary-General called on the United Nations to adopt a prevention strategy rather than rely on the usual reactive response to conflict. He argued that such a strategy called for a more holistic and developmental focus in addressing the root causes of conflict, including addressing socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and other structural causes of conflict, rather than treating only its symptoms.

Two further reports on the prevention of armed conflict, in 2001, and a progress report on the prevention of armed conflict, in 2006, were published. They contained numerous recommendations on how the United Nations could collectively mobilize greater coherence and focus for conflict prevention.

Yet Africa remains confronted by conflicts driven by underdevelopment, poverty and hunger, lack of democracy, injustice, religious extremism and plain ignorance. It would therefore seem obvious that a reassessment of how the United Nations contributes to conflict prevention must be undertaken, taking into account the practical experience gained over many years of resolving conflict in Africa. The active role that the African Union has played and continues to play in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is a huge asset in complementing the efforts of the United Nations.

The establishment of the Peace and Security Council; the African standby force; the Early Warning System; the Pan-African Parliament; the Economic, Social and Cultural Council; the New Partnership for Africa's Development; and the African Peer Review Mechanism have gone a long way in improving security as well as creating sustaining conditions of political stability, good governance and economic development.

It is now up to the United Nations to use its convening power to link all global efforts to create a better and safer world for all the world's citizens. We all share the responsibility to ensure that the United

Nations lives up to expectations in strengthening regional and continental structures to complement global initiatives in conflict prevention. In organizing this open debate on conflict prevention and resolution, the Congolese delegation has given us the opportunity to discuss ways to improve the manner in which the United Nations can address the issue of conflict prevention in a coherent and coordinated fashion. We believe that the draft presidential statement before us lays a good foundation for that effort, and we support it.

Mr. Al-Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I wish to state how much my delegation appreciates the efforts of the president of the Council for the month of August. We wish to commend you Sir, for wisely choosing to hold this thematic debate on the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa.

My delegation would have preferred the debate to be more extensive and more focused on the role of the Council in conflict prevention in general, because there are a number of conflicts throughout the world where the Council has virtually no presence and where it does little to put an end to those conflicts, such as in the Middle East. At the same time, we will have an opportunity to debate that issue tomorrow morning.

Two years ago, meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, Council members adopted resolution 1625 (2005) to promote the effectiveness of the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflict, in particular in Africa. The resolution contained important preventive measures that addressed among other issues the handling of emerging conflicts, as a preliminary to their resolution. We wish to draw attention in particular to conflict prevention, rather than confining ourselves to addressing existing conflicts.

My delegation wishes to emphasize the importance of analysing the experiences of past conflicts in Africa. In fact, a number of reports published by the Secretariat in past years warned that there could be conflicts in some countries that could risk spilling over from one country to another. The question should be posed — what are the causes of the proliferation of those conflicts? Were the warnings not taken seriously; or was there a lack of resources that prevented the Council from taking up the challenge? Has the Council failed to address the root causes of those armed conflicts such as illiteracy, economic corruption, inadequacies in domestic policies, lack of transparency and credibility, non-compliance by Governments with the rule of law, violations of human rights, the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons, or the role of the illegal exploitation of natural resources which has ignited conflicts as those resources have been pillaged?

Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union must be solidified in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security in order to overcome the obstacles and challenges concerning armed conflict in Africa, in particular following the adoption of the joint communiqué between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council in Addis Ababa during the mission of the Security Council last June. Prior to that, a communiqué was issued in November 2006, also in Addis Ababa, which was a memorandum of understanding between the two organizations on a 10-year partnership. In order for the memorandums and communiqués to have any effect, we hope that in future, Council resolutions concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, as well as other international and regional organizations, would be issued under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter so that words will be followed by actions and there will be true partnerships between the United Nations and other organizations, in particular the African Union.

In addition, the United Nations must not hesitate to bring to bear its resources and expertise for the benefit of regional initiatives undertaken by the African Union. Such extremely praiseworthy initiatives include the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to maintain peace in Somalia. As the Council is aware, political and financial reasons have prevented AMISOM from benefiting from necessary support when the last resolution on Somalia was adopted (S/RES/1772 (2007)).

The role of the Economic Community of West African States, which has contributed to the establishment of an effective collective security regime at the subregional level as a member of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, must also be strengthened. That Committee was created in 1992 and since then has played a role in preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention. In

addition to regional and subregional measures which have been emphasized in today's presidential statement, Qatar also wishes to call upon countries in the Great Lakes region of Africa to implement the Pact on Security, Stability and Development among those countries, which was adopted during the summit meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held in Nairobi in December 2006.

Those arrangements and mechanisms are part and parcel of the international collective security system as provided for in the United Nations Charter. It is thus essential to genuinely recognize the importance of those arrangements and of enhancing them as a part of the mechanisms for maintaining international peace and security that the United Nations must support financially and logistically when necessary.

We can note as an example, and as we noticed during the last Council mission to Africa in June, there are important questions that are not given adequate attention. They require that the Council adjust the method of addressing them so that our working methodology in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa is balanced and professional and so that our focus is not just on resolving on certain topics that do not serve the principles of maintaining international peace and security and equality among States.

For example, the Council must address the challenges of cross-border security between African States and the deplorable humanitarian conditions, violations of human rights and the ethnic conflicts in some African countries, particularly in West Africa, which the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court was repeatedly unable to visit in order to study the humanitarian situation there.

If we wish to work seriously to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa, we must change our tactics and methodology of work, particularly in the Security Council, which must be able to deal with all issues of Africa transparently, justly and fairly while respecting fully States' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Finally, protection of children and youth must also be seen as an important aspect of any comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. The Council's action in this regard should not be restricted to considering the conditions of children affected by existing conflicts. Child protection programmes should include measures to address the decline of levels of primary education and high unemployment rates among young people, which is considered the main cause of many children engaging with the parties of any conflict.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the initiative of the delegation of the Republic of the Congo to hold this open debate on prevention and resolution of conflicts, in particular in Africa.

The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Effective implementation of this noble mandate hinges on the trust and support of all Member States of the United Nations and on the coordination and cooperation of regional and subregional organizations, as well as on its own persistent efforts to explore new solutions.

The Chinese delegation would like to make the following four points on the topic before the Council today.

First, greater importance should be attached to preventive diplomacy, as was rightly pointed out in the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the delegation of the Republic of the Congo, of 14 August 2007 (S/2007/496). Although the Security Council has on many occasions underscored its determination to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations efforts to prevent armed conflicts and to develop an effective, comprehensive strategy on conflict prevention, progress on the work in this area remains less satisfactory. The main reason for this is that the tendency towards conflict resolution rather than prevention is yet to be effectively redressed.

In the past five years, the United Nations has spent more than $18 billion on peacekeeping operations. If more effective efforts had been carried out in the area of conflict prevention, much less would have been spent and many more lives would have been saved from the scourge of conflict. It is therefore important to be fully committed to putting all ideas about conflict prevention into practice.

Secondly, more reform and ingenuity should be encouraged. Since its inception sixty years ago, the United Nations has made unremitting efforts and widely acknowledged achievements in the field of conflict prevention and resolution. Nevertheless, confronted by various natures and forms of armed conflict today, the Council should be adapted to

changing circumstances and come up with solutions more suitable to current situations.

While dealing with the domestic conflicts of a country, it is essential to bring into full play the active role of the Government of the country concerned. The Council's overall objective in this area is to help the national Government to establish social stability. In case of sudden crisis, it is all the more important for the Council's actions to be attuned to the background and the environment that shape the crisis and to intervene in a timely manner so as to effectively resolve the crisis.

Special attention should be paid to dealing with problems both at their surface level and at their roots by taking an integrative approach addressing the economic and social causes of the conflict. All the armed conflicts on the African continent stem from a multitude of causes, most of which are related to poverty and arms proliferation. Only by addressing the deeply rooted causes of conflict can it be possible to gradually emerge from playing a reactive role as firefighters and gain more leverage in the endeavour to prevent conflict, thus improving the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Thirdly, coordination and cooperation with the regional and subregional organizations should be significantly enhanced. It is widely acknowledged that in recent years the African Union (AU) has played an ever more important role in coping with the conflicts in the African region on behalf of the international community, and it has made invaluable contributions to the maintenance of world peace and security. As an embodiment of the will of African countries to achieve unity and self-reliance, the AU is endowed with a unique political, moral and geographical advantage in handling conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

The Security Council should continue to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union and its Peace and Security Council, fully utilizing its regional early warning mechanism and peacekeeping capacity and providing various types of assistance to the AU to help it to strengthen its capacity-building. At present, matters related to Africa account for over 60 per cent of the issues on the Council's regular agenda dealing with regional hot-spot problems. As a matter of fact, by providing assistance to the African Union and to subregional organizations in Africa, the Council is also improving its own capacity to handle international affairs in general. The Council should attach greater importance to its work in this area.

Lastly, more efforts must be made to fully utilize resources within the United Nations system and to give full play to the good offices of the Secretary-General. Multiple track approaches — addressing problems in political, security, social and economic areas — are needed to prevent and resolve conflicts. Given their respective expertise and vast experience within their own fields, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the General Assembly should set an example for the international community by enhancing their communication and exchanges and learning from one another so as to make up for their own shortfalls with a view to making concerted efforts.

In recent years, the efforts of the Secretary-General and his representatives to actively participate in resolving regional conflicts through their international good offices have yielded noticeable results. In doing so, they have benefited to a great extent from the trust and support of the Security Council. In the future, the Council should continue to support, through various ways and means, the Secretary-General's role in this area.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir, in your role as President of this Council, for taking the initiative to organize this open debate on the issue of conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa — a region that, as you know, is particularly close to our hearts. We welcomed the participation of the Secretary-General at the beginning of our debate, and we welcome now the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, who is with us for the continuation of this very important work.

Belgium fully adheres to the statement to be made shortly by our Portuguese colleague in the name of the European Union. It especially aligns itself with the comments on the role of the International Criminal Court in the prevention of the use of force, as well as on the importance of the role of women in both the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

We welcome the increased attention given to conflict prevention in the different organs of the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council. It is the responsibility of all parts of the United Nations to reflect on how to reinforce this culture of prevention,

referred to by the Secretary-General in his report last year (A/60/891).

We welcome the continuation by the Security Council of the work begun by resolution 1631 (2005). That resolution emphasized the importance of closer cooperation between the United Nations on one hand, and regional and subregional organizations on the other, in all phases of crisis management. During the open debate last March on this topic (5649th meeting), we said that cooperation, coordination and capacity are the three key concepts determining the success of any joint effort between the Council and regional and subregional organizations.

Belgium advocates a pragmatic and empirical approach in this sphere. In this context, we welcome the publication of a joint communiqué by the Security Council and the African Union during the joint meeting on 16 June in Addis Ababa. We would particularly like to highlight the decision to hold a meeting at least once per year between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

As my Peruvian colleague has already pointed out, continuing and expanding the discussion begun during the public debate held this past June on the subject of natural resources and conflict should be another element of the Security Council's efforts in the area of conflict prevention. In the presidential statement adopted by the Council on that occasion, the Council took note of the role that natural resources can play in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. As we are all aware, natural resources can act as a destabilizing factor. There is, therefore, a need for sound management of natural resources, not only in terms of development but also of peace and security and the prevention of conflict.

What can, and should, the Security Council do? The Council should, of course, not seek to exercise some sort of stewardship over existing initiatives, such as the Kimberly Process and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which are not directly under the Council's purview. However, those initiatives do have an impact upon international peace and security, which are the primary responsibilities of the Security Council. The efforts already being carried out by the Council with regard to natural resources — through the sanctions committees, among other ways — should be strengthened and made more coherent. In its management of conflicts, the Council should consider at an earlier stage whether it is appropriate for it to address the natural resources aspect. The group of experts mechanism could be strengthened through the establishment of a standing expertise centre within the Secretariat — without, however, placing a further burden on existing structures.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation welcomes the participation of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at today's meeting, especially as it is taking place on the eve of his trip to Africa.

We believe that the President's initiative to have the Security Council take up the issue of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa is both important and timely.

The United Nations, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the African Union have recently done significant work to identify the causes of conflict in Africa. Resolving those conflicts entails in particular overcoming old and well-known political and socio-economic problems, which are being exacerbated by new challenges and threats. There is no doubt that African States must themselves play the primary role in resolving those problems. As experience has demonstrated, our African colleagues do indeed have the desire to do so. Not only is that evident in the measures undertaken by African States themselves to overcome critical socio-economic problems, carry out structural economic reforms and reforms in the areas of management, promoting democracy, law and order, judicial systems and the establishment of democratic armed forces; it is also borne out by the course charted by African States to strengthen regional inter-African cooperation, thereby ensuring a joint platform to collectively resolve the major challenges facing Africa, to strengthen peace, stability and security on the continent, to increase Africa's peacekeeping capabilities, to combat infections diseases and to improve environmental conditions in Africa. We believe that the course of action plotted by African States merits support, given the interrelated causes of conflict on the continent.

As the Council is aware, there is no quick or easy fix to meeting the major challenges that exist in preventing conflict. Africa's friends, and Africans themselves, must undertake multifaceted and painstaking joint efforts in order to break the vicious circle, in which insufficient development breeds social

problems that in turn intensify political and military instability, thereby leading to conflict and ultimately destroying social and economic development programmes.

We are pleased that we have come to today's meeting with some positive results. The Secretary-General today gave us some optimistic information in saying that the number of conflicts in Africa has recently declined. Another positive element has been the constructive practical dialogue between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in resolving acute crisis situations — a dialogue that recurs on a regular basis. We believe that the existing agreements between the two bodies, especially the Addis Ababa agreement of 16 November 2006 and the joint communiqué of 16 June 2007, which was issued during the Council's mission to Africa, serve to strengthen the basis for that interaction and sets a course of action for the long term. We also support the proposal to have the Council once again consider ways to further implement resolution 1625 (2005), once the Secretary-General submits his report on the issue.

I should also point out the evident increase in the efforts of African States themselves in the area of preventing and resolving conflicts on the continent, especially through the work of the African Union and regional and subregional organizations. That illustrates Africa's readiness and capability to assume responsibility for resolving its problems. In that regard, I should like to note another important element, namely, that the further development of early-warning mechanisms, which have been frequently referred to today, must go hand-in-hand with the strengthening of cooperation and coordination mechanisms within the United Nations system as well as with international partners, especially with African regional and subregional organizations. In our view, successful early identification of such conflicts will depend upon how comprehensively we implement the early warning system and on how carefully we bear in mind the specificities of individual conflict situations.

We share the view of the Secretary-General that investing in logistical and intelligence capacities in order to prevent conflicts and strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations in the area of conflict mediation and political analysis to assess conflict situations will be very beneficial for the international community, as it will contribute to lowering the number of conflicts in Africa.

There is no doubt that without truly achieving long-term resolution of local conflicts it will not be possible to ensure that Africa can really achieve robust sustainable development and full integration into the world economy.

One of the key components of a strategy to strengthen peace must be the establishment of an effective pan-African security architecture that aims both at conflict prevention and resolution and at comprehensive resolution of post-conflict reconstruction issues.

The international community must do everything possible to ensure that the mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflict set up by the African Union and the continent's subregions become fully operational.

We also believe that we must do more to activate the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, encouraging regional organizations to take proactive steps in the areas of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes. That entails in particular continuing the practice of African peacekeeping operations supported by the Council and providing assistance to establish African rapid-deployment forces and early-warning systems. In doing so, we must of course comply with the prerogatives set for the Council by the Charter as regards the establishment of peacekeeping operations whose mandates include the use of force.

Russia will continue to provide all possible assistance to resolve the problems of African countries, with which we have traditionally had ties of friendship and partnership. Africa was, and continues to be, a priority focus. We have been very pleased to note the growing role of African States in world affairs and their contributions to strengthening the multilateral approach to resolving the most acute problems of our time.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the Russian delegation supports the draft presidential statement that has been prepared by the President with regard to today's agenda item. In our view, this document contains key provisions that constitute a programme of action for the international community in its efforts to maintain peace and security and to further enhance the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Allow me to join others in thanking you and your delegation for taking the initiative of organizing this open debate on a very important issue. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Mérorès, who has spoken on behalf the President of the General Assembly, and Mr. Christian, Acting Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, and to welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Mrs. Migiro, to the Council.

Conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is a major concern of the Security Council and is an important part of its work for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council's institutional and practical cooperation with the African Union in this regard continues to evolve, moving today in the direction of greater partnership. We welcome this development.

There are five major points underlying the Indonesian perspective on this issue.

The first is that the quantity and nature of conflicts in Africa have been changing. Conflicts that five or ten years ago may have seemed intractable are now being resolved, particularly in the Great Lakes region and in West Africa. Other difficult problems, however, persist, as in Somalia and the Western Sahara, and some new ones have emerged, particularly in East and Central Africa. These conflicts, moreover, are far more complicated and wide-ranging, interlinking intra- and inter-State conflict dynamics. The United Nations, together with the African Union and subregional organizations, has confronted these issues and is deploying new ways of cooperating and collaborating to address recent and persistent conflicts.

Second, preventive measures are cost-effective and save lives. The best way to maintain peace and security is to stop conflicts before they start and, when they do start, to keep them contained. The tinderbox of unrest in Africa needs to be monitored and kept in check, lest it threaten to ignite as a result of polarizing issues and economic adversity and deprivation.

In order to prevent a flame from becoming a wildfire, we need an early awareness of the possibility that conflict might occur. An early warning mechanism helps alert us to potential or latent conflicts. While the concept of an early warning system is not new, we believe its full potential has not been realized. It is not enough to simply be aware of hot spots for conflicts. We need resources and the means to alter the situation on the ground and contribute to the maintenance of peace in addition to the ability to predict where conflict might arise.

It has never been very clear, however, what calls for preventive measures by the international community and what falls within the domestic jurisdiction of States under Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is clear that conflicts in Africa today are, with one exception, intra-State conflicts. We believe that countries have the primary responsibility to prevent and resolve their internal conflicts. The preventive methods called for in the report of the Secretary-General last year on the preventive of armed conflict are applicable; in all cases these include structural, operational and systematic prevention methods.

Our next point is that conflict prevention is closely related to efforts to address the root causes of conflict. Particularly important is the fact that the sources of conflict are frequently economic and social in nature. Consequently, the Security Council should more closely engage its partners in the United Nations system that are competent in economic and social issues. Indeed, Article 65 of the Charter lays the foundation for such cooperation. The Security Council affirmed in resolution 1625 (2005) its determination to cooperate with the Economic and Social Council.

Fourth, while we should do all we can to prevent conflict in Africa in terms of committing troops to peacekeeping, there are many advantages to troops being drawn from within the African region. As recently highlighted in Darfur and Somalia, we need to put a mechanism in place whereby more troops can be trained and the African standby force can become truly operational.

Utilizing regional forces is beneficial, as they have the advantage of familiarity with the region, cultures and people and in many cases have the potential to gain greater trust among the parties. Such a force could also be deployed faster and have an immediate impact on the ground while the Security Council considers the issue. There are also greater incentives to commit troops to conflicts in neighbouring countries, because of their inherent interest in regional stability. It is essential that United Nations peacekeeping operations or United Nations-

mandated operations should be neutral and perceived as such.

Finally, we are convinced that United Nations/African Union cooperation, coordination and collaboration are essential for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. We welcome recent strengthening of that cooperation, in which African countries and the African Union play a central role, while the United Nations strengthens the provision of resources for the African Union.

The joint communiqué between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of last June is an essential instrument for strengthening and developing a stronger and more structured relationship on conflict prevention, management and resolution; on peacekeeping and peacebuilding; and on information-sharing on conflict situations on the agendas of the two bodies.

A multi-pronged approach is required to prevent, resolve and eradicate violent conflict in Africa. There are promising signs in many of the existing conflicts in Africa today, and with appropriate preventive and innovative measures we may be able to ensure that there are fewer human tragedies in the region in the future. We should commit our intellectual, political, financial and institutional resources to this effort and develop more advanced coordination with regional economic and political institutions. The time to act is now.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this public debate. The involvement of the Congo, which chairs the working group on conflict prevention established in accordance with resolution 1625 (2005), is long-standing and active. We welcome this involvement and the presence, at the beginning of this debate, of the Secretary-General, that of the Deputy Secretary-General and their commitment to Africa. I would also like to thank Mr. Mérorès and Mr. Christian for their statements. I would like to state that my delegation associates itself fully with the statement that will be made in a few moments by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

The subject of today's debate is of particular importance for the French authorities, within the general framework of our commitment to peace in Africa. In this spirit, the President of the French Republic will chair, in New York, in conjunction with the opening of the upcoming session of the General Assembly, a Security Council meeting of heads of State and Government on the theme of Africa and the challenges to international peace and security. The Security Council is stepping up its involvement in combating conflicts, particularly in Africa, increasingly taking account of their regional dimension, as it did in its successive dealings with the case of Darfur, and the regional consequences of this crisis for neighbouring countries.

We should continue along these lines, but also give greater thought to prevention. The Council should perhaps reflect on what is the specific feature of prevention that would cause it to intervene in sensitive contexts, where the absence of an open crisis makes it more difficult — even when time is of the essence — to justify actions that need to be taken on an emergency basis. How, specifically, could or should the Council act in this context?

The Secretary-General shared his thinking on what could be done to make the Secretariat more effective in conflict prevention. My delegation would like to suggest some ways in which we could develop our thinking on this issue.

First of all, the Council, through the Secretariat, should doubtless be better and more quickly informed of the multiple precursors portending a crisis. That requires a strengthening of the tools of the Secretariat to become aware of and assess crisis situations. Indeed, the Secretary-General plays an essential role in this area, since the Charter of the United Nations authorizes him to draw the attention of the Council to different situations, but also because the Secretary-General plays — often discreetly — an effective mediation role, as was done on the question of the border between Cameroon and Nigeria, and particularly the Bakassi peninsula.

A more ambitious prevention policy also requires more cooperation, in the case of Africa, between the United Nations and the African Union, in particular between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, allowing the goal of prevention to be served by the close links forged between these organizations with regard to issues such as Sudan and Darfur. This cooperation of the United Nations with the African Union as well as with the European Union or regional organizations such as the

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), enables specific actions to be taken in key areas for conflict prevention. Such key areas include, for example, the sending of electoral observers at times that are, by definition, moments of high political tension, in which the international community has a role to play both in encouraging the political actors, and in affirming its vigilance, as the Council did very recently regarding the elections in Sierra Leone.

The United Nations and the Council should also continue to work on the causes of instability. First of all, beyond national political conflicts, they must better understand and deal with issues such as illegal exploitation of natural resources, based on what was done in the case of the blood diamonds, or arms trafficking, particularly of small arms and light weapons, the proliferation of which makes it all the more difficult to extricate countries from crises.

Combating these threats and, more generally, an active conflict prevention policy also requires steadfast support to improvements in the capacities of countries and organizations that are on the front lines in Africa. The international community must intensify its already substantial efforts to build African administrative and judicial capacities, to improve the rule of law, and to upgrade the organization of the security sector. The European Union, not only through its training programmes, but also in the form of an unprecedented level of financing, in particular, the Peace Facility and programmes of the European Development Fund, is a solid partner to national and regional programmes that contribute to conflict prevention. Consideration is being given, in particular in West Africa, to tripartite programmes that would bring together the United Nations, the European Union and subregional organizations like ECOWAS.

Furthermore, protection of civilians is also a condition for avoiding conflicts and their resurgence. The Council is working in this area, particularly with respect to the issue of women and children in armed conflicts. France is pleased at the Secretary-General's appointment last May of Mr. Francis Deng as Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

Finally we should do a better job of allowing for the risks of resumption of conflict and relapse into violence. Several countries in Africa, with the support of the United Nations, have found their way out of the crises under which they were suffering. The Peacebuilding Commission must play its full part in retaining what has been achieved and in guaranteeing a solid investment by the international community in the post-conflict phase. Moreover, combating impunity is an essential factor in consolidating the gains of the peace process, preventing the resurgence of conflicts and dissuading those who seek to achieve their ends through massive violations of human rights. It is one of the challenges facing international justice in general, and the International Criminal Court, in particular.

The Security Council therefore has an important role to play to allow for greater coordination and greater coherence in conflict prevention, both within the United Nations system and beyond it, and in close coordination with partners such as the African Union or the European Union.

But our debate also speaks to the need for the international community to go further and to take up, as a part of its approach to conflict prevention, the broader challenges that have an impact on stability in Africa and elsewhere, notably issues of health or of climate change. It is the wish of France that we will be able to deal with these issues in a more in-depth manner during the high-level Security Council event in September to which I referred earlier.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Congo.

First of all, I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro for their personal involvement, and also commend Ambassador Mérorès and Ambassador Christian for their statements as representatives of the President of the General Assembly and the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, respectively.

Nowadays, we see human distress on too many faces around the world, marking the anguish of aftermath which reflects a lack of security that is unworthy of our times. We live, in fact, in a world drenched in consumption, intoxicated by scientific and technological prowess and stunned by economic performance.

On the other hand, we are rightly revolted by what is happening in Darfur, the situation in Somalia is of concern to us, and we are very anxious at the turn of

events in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to give just a few examples.

This contrasting picture brings us up against the purposes of the United Nations which, according to the Charter, are to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of the common ends of peace and security, development and fundamental freedoms.

Furthermore, maintaining international peace and security, the main responsibility for which lies with the Security Council, cannot be validly accomplished except if being coupled with a process to lessen the relative inability of nations to deal with the phenomena that bring about insecurity.

Equipping ourselves with tools capable of making such an investment in human security represents, in the view of my country, an attitude and culture of prevention that is well understood and seriously undertaken.

Until recently, the balance of terror rested upon the well-known adage, "if you want peace, prepare for war", which excused the international community from taking any bold initiative directed at the protagonists of an imminent conflict. Today, we do not read conflicts in the same way. There are many variables involved — disputes among States, obviously, but also and increasingly disagreements within States, as well as cross-border insecurity due to phenomena such as terrorism or illicit trafficking in conventional arms or natural resources.

Our debate is therefore valuable because it brings us up to date on a topic that is certainly familiar but that, given the diversity of approaches involved, risks forever remaining a noble idea, inspiring in theory, that is difficult to carry out in practice.

In proposing this item, the Congo wished to raise awareness of the multidimensional character of any approach to conflict prevention — to the extent that a peacekeeping operation can be multidimensional. Even the formula for hybrid operations has an identical approach, in that such operations, by definition, involve active cooperation among local, subregional or regional organizations.

Through its resolution 1625 (2005), the Security Council gave itself a solid foundation enabling it to play the effective role that it assumed during its 5261st meeting, at the level of heads of State and Government, on 14 September 2005. Nonetheless, peacekeeping operations have always taken precedence over prevention. That is confirmed by the thematic debates organized by the Council on issues as varied as the protection of civilians, the role of women, natural resources and even energy and climate change. The Council could not provide better evidence of the inclusive nature of its mission in this area.

The Council is thus gradually including the underlying causes of conflicts in its field of research for better ways to address issues related to peace and security. The emergence of non-State actors and the multiplicity of risk factors compel us to resort to new initiatives to better adapt Council action to the challenges that they pose.

Strengthening the role of the Security Council — the terms of reference of this debate — can therefore be seen at three levels of intervention.

The first level deals with institutions of the United Nations system or organs directly involved, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and humanitarian organizations, which could do more to join forces with the Security Council in an appropriate forum to show a spirit of coherence, which the United Nations needs in the area of conflict prevention.

The second level concerns States or groups of States expected to establish, at the local level, national mechanisms open to civil society to serve as an interface with the international community in their partnership relationships.

The third level deals with the relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the Charter. The United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to those relations by signing, on 16 November 2006, the Declaration on Enhancing UN-AU cooperation: Framework for the Ten-year Capacity-building Programme for the African Union.

We are convinced that, in its practical modalities, such cooperation will draw on the channels of existing subregional mechanisms. Currently, the most developed are those of the Economic Community of West African States, supported by the United Nations Office for West Africa — the first decentralized regional office of the Department of Political Affairs;

the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region; and the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which is eagerly awaiting technical assistance from the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, managed by the Department for Disarmament Affairs.

With regard to the framework for the Ten-year Capacity-building Programme for the African Union, its strategic nature means that it will also target African subregional organizations. That will make it possible to focus the efforts of the United Nations and the African Union, "with priority on conflict prevention, mediation and good offices, peacekeeping", given the heavy losses inflicted by conflicts on populations of many regions of the continent.

The concept of collective security, thus reconsidered, is supported by my country. That is why President Denis Sassou Nguesso is one of its most resolute defenders, as attested by the Congo's endorsement of two pacts — the Great Lakes pact and the Economic Community of West African States pact — whose complementarity is shown in the similarity of their mechanisms. Indeed, they are based on the principles of non-aggression, mutual assistance, democracy, good governance and co-development so as to make the needs and aspirations of peoples the components of a normalized rule of law.

So that the Security Council can soon make good use of such political and legal instruments, the working group that we chair wishes to be able to draw from them the elements of a coherent comprehensive strategy that will benefit the Council. To that end, in November we plan to hold a seminar to explore in greater depth the views expressed during this debate and emphasized in the presidential statement to be adopted.

Finally, an African thinker who died recently, Professor Joseph Ki-Zerbo, said of Africa that it must not remain lying down, under pain of death, but should stand up. That is an attitude of vigilance that endows the duty of mobilization with its raison d'être — that is to say, prevention and betting on the future.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I call on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): For the sake of time, I will not read out the complete text of my intervention, which is being distributed to members.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing today's debate. Since this is the first time that we have spoken under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his very pertinent intervention and for his personal commitment to this issue. In the same vein, I would like to welcome the interventions of Ambassador Léo Mérorès and Ambassador Leslie Kojo Christian and to salute the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro.

The European Union supports the draft presidential statement to be adopted later today.

The European Union is very pleased to note the strengthening of a culture of prevention across the United Nations system. Moreover, in the institutional context, recent United Nations reforms, including the creation of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, are assisting countries on the path towards sustainable peace and development, thus helping to prevent the emergence or recurrence of conflict.

However, further cooperation, coordination and coherence are needed in this field, not only among the main United Nations bodies, but also between the United Nations and international and regional organizations and other relevant actors, including non-governmental organizations. We also encourage Member States to focus resources in order to enhance United Nations preventive mechanisms, and we suggest that regular reporting to the Security Council on prevention and early warning would help the Council to better support that aim.

The European Union underlines the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the

maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, we appreciate the contribution of and the partnerships between the Council and international, regional and subregional organizations in the facilitation of political processes, as well as in peacekeeping and post-conflict scenarios.

The European Union believes that the United Nations should be open to using innovative approaches proposed by regional and subregional actors, while establishing clear arrangements for cooperation and the division of work and responsibilities. We are particularly pleased with the substantive progress in the cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in crisis management, in particular the signing on 12 June 2007 of the Joint Statement on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management. United Nations-European Union cooperation is also developing well in the field of conflict prevention, notably through regular desk-to-desk dialogues.

We are also pleased with the joint communiqué agreed to on 16 June 2007 between the United Nations and the African Union, and we encourage a close relationship between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations. We commend them for setting up — with the support of the international community, including the European Union — peacekeeping operations on the African continent, notably the African Union Mission in Sudan, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and we welcome the United Nations Security Council decision to deploy a hybrid operation in Darfur.

Ownership and responsibility are important principles of the European Union Strategy for Africa, adopted by the European Council in December 2005. We recognize that enhancing Africa's capabilities is crucial for African ownership. In that context, in November 2006, the Council of the European Union adopted Conclusions on Strengthening African Capabilities for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts. A joint strategy between Europe and Africa for the next decade is currently under negotiation and should be adopted later this year at the second European Union/Africa Summit, in Lisbon.

In the area of peace and security, the ongoing establishment of an African peace and security architecture, including the operationalization of the African Standby Force and the development of the African Peace Support Trainers' Association, is a key initiative that will benefit from broad European Union support.

Sustainable, predictable and flexible funding for African-led peace-support operations is another major challenge. In 2004, the European Union established the African Peace Facility to enable us to support, using financial instruments, African capacities in planning and executing peace operations. The capacities of African subregional organizations in conflict prevention are further supported through substantial regional programmes financed by the European Development Fund. Tripartite capacity programmes involving the United Nations are being considered, notably in West Africa involving the Economic Community of West African States.

The effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security is a prerequisite for achieving, maintaining and promoting sustainable peace. A gender perspective must be integrated into all conflict prevention and peacekeeping activities, in particular when developing measures for HIV/AIDS prevention and care and against gender-based violence.

The continued failure to protect children in conflict, and the abuses and harms that persist after conflicts have ostensibly ended underline the need to give high priority to strengthening child protection in conflict. Therefore, we welcome resolution 1612 (2005) and the mechanisms it created, as well as the adoption of the Paris guidelines on the protection and reintegration of children associated with armed forces or armed groups of February 2007, as well as the Cape Town Principles on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces and demobilization and social reintegration of child soldiers in Africa.

Understanding the multidimensional root causes of conflicts is the basis of conflict prevention — it is far better to prevent than to correct. Civil society is an important partner in preventing violent conflicts and their recurrence, in strengthening democracy and in promoting human rights. The European Union has devoted considerable resources to supporting civil society and strongly encourages others to do likewise. United Nations organs and international and regional organizations should also explore ways of building partnerships with civil society groups in order to

facilitate conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

My last point is that there is no peace without justice. Justice and the rule of law are at the core of the peaceful settlement of disputes and of harmonious coexistence both at the national and the international level. The newly established unit on the rule of law will contribute, in our opinion, to enhancing coordination and support for rule of law issues in the United Nations system.

Moreover, the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is fundamental. The European Union remains firmly committed to the effective functioning of the ICC. We stress the importance of full cooperation with the Court and call on States that have not yet done so to accede to the Rome Statute.

The European Union welcomes the progress made by the Court in recent years, and we believe that the Security Council has a particular role to play in combating impunity and preventing the most heinous international crimes, as it is empowered to refer situations to that Court.

The European Union will continue contributing to international peace and security in every way possible, including here at the United Nations, where conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa, must continue to be of the highest priority and urgency.

The President (*spoke in French*): Still pursuant to rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, we will continue with the list of speakers. I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by stating how pleased I am to see your delegation, Sir, presiding over the work of the Council during the month. Yours is a brotherly African country with a deep and valuable involvement in the international community and my delegation wishes to thank you for holding this very important debate. The initiative is particularly important because it addresses conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa, our mother continent. We hope that today's discussion will follow an operational and objective approach that will contribute to strengthening the role of the Security Council in preventing conflicts, in keeping with the goal of eliminating the root causes of such conflicts through peaceful settlement, in order to achieve lasting peace and security.

Over two years have passed since the Security Council adopted resolution 1625 (2005), which stressed the importance of drafting global and effective strategies and seeking to build the capacity of the United Nations in preventing conflicts and in building the national capacities of individual countries involved in conflicts by remedying the underlying causes. That leads us to stress an important idea, namely, the need to create priorities through the work of the Security Council. As a first stage in addressing such problems, we must establish priorities and then move on to tackling those problems.

Defining the causes of conflict and settling conflict through dialogue are matters of the highest priority. However, the Security Council has always taken the view that the settlement of conflicts should be dealt with in political terms only as a second stage. For that reason we have not been able to develop strategies to resolve conflicts in the past because peacekeeping operations, whatever their names and the numbers involved, cannot recreate peace from nothing. Thus, it is very beneficial for the Security Council to include among its priorities the question of the political settlement of disputes.

The prevention of armed conflicts also rests on the particularly important premise, namely, the constant and important role of regional and subregional entities. Early recognition of the root causes is likewise important, and the Security Council must emphasize this as well. Keeping within the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter and without undermining the importance of the regional and subregional bodies that have played an important role and have much in common with the countries directly involved, the African Union has shown itself to be a prime example of regional involvement in its dealing with the situation in Darfur. The imperative of resolving conflicts means that the United Nations has a leading role to play here.

Another matter that should be given consideration is strengthening the role of the United Nations in economic and social sectors. We must also bolster the various United Nations bodies: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the agencies and funds relevant to these concerns, while also building national capacities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). We must also bolster national reconstruction and economic recovery, technology transfer, combating climate change and

deterioration of the environment. Expertise needs to be shared in these regards.

Development is a key and prime factor in preventing conflict, and the United Nations should, therefore, enhance its economic and social role rather than deal with conflict prevention in a reactive manner. Tackling the root causes of conflict will guarantee that the peace that is developed is of a lasting nature. It also ensures that there will be no return to war. The United Nations could thus avoid the tremendous expenses of a return to war and the ensuing costs of peacekeeping operations.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Norway welcomes endeavours to increase the involvement of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. A strong commitment by the Security Council is needed to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive involvement of the international community in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

We support the role the regional organizations play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The African Union has already been shouldering a heavy burden with regards to peace and security on the African continent. We are encouraged by the fact that African countries themselves are taking a leading role in the settlement of African disputes by peaceful means and in the promotion of preventive action in response to threats to regional peace and security. To strengthen these important regional efforts, we support close cooperation between the United Nations and other partners. We welcome the commitment of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, as agreed at Addis Ababa on 16 June, to cooperate more closely in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution.

Norway also attaches great value to increasing women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. The United Nations and the African Union must work together to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict.

When deployed, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) will be a big step forward in international peace operations. The ability of UNAMID to fulfil its mandate to provide security, prevent threats and attacks against civilians and protect humanitarian operations will influence future cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations. An immediate challenge confronting the two bodies is their common effort to negotiate a peace deal in Darfur. Norway strongly supports this cooperation. We are willing to contribute both financially and with human resources to the joint negotiation secretariat for the upcoming peace talks. We hope that the United Nations will work in close contact with its partners and ask for support when needed during this important process.

The peace negotiations present the United Nations with many challenges. In the Sudan, the United Nations is now actively involved in the security sector, the humanitarian sector, the development sector and now also in the peace negotiations. To add to the complexity, the United Nations is involved in two different security operations in different parts of the country. To succeed, it is absolutely necessary that the United Nations is perceived as a single unified actor and that it is able to act as one.

It is a sad fact that more than half of all conflicts that are solved through negotiations relapse into conflict within a few years. There is an urgent need to improve our ability to support post-conflict countries and strengthen their ability to meet expectations. A more effective United Nations working closely with its regional partners will make an important contribution in this regard. It is also fundamental that we continue to learn from experience in order to develop better mechanisms and responses.

The Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, has the potential to be a powerful tool to meet these challenges in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner.

The challenges are daunting. If we do not manage to contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace in Burundi and Sierra Leone, it would not only be at huge costs for the people in both countries, but also for Commission and the credibility of the United Nations. I have been honoured to chair the Burundi-specific format of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi was endorsed by the Commission in June as an instrument of

engagement and dialogue among Burundi, the Commission and other stakeholders. The document defines the crucial peacebuilding priorities faced by Burundi. It will provide a helpful guide for reaching peacebuilding objectives and mobilizing the necessary financial and political support.

Preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa presents us with enormous challenges. A better coordinated and more comprehensive approach by the United Nations will strengthen regional efforts by the African Union to safeguard peace and security in Africa.

The President *(spoke in French):* I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) *(spoke in French)*: Important financial resources have been dedicated to the management of conflict, but the funds invested in the prevention of wars and crises have remained modest. This, despite the fact that effective conflict prevention would save not only innumerable lives but also reduce excessive spending. Thus, we consider the subject of today's debate very timely and we thank you for the concept paper you have provided us. Switzerland, which is Co-Chairperson of the Group of Friends on conflict prevention, is grateful to you, Mr. President, for the opportunity you have given us to take up this very important issue. Today I shall focus on institutional aspects.

First, cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union to resolve the conflict in Darfur is an example of a productive and innovative partnership between the two organizations. Switzerland welcomes the joint communiqué issued by the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 16 June 2007. My country encourages the Security Council to continue to explore ways of strengthening cooperation and improving the sharing of tasks with the African Union.

Secondly, preventing, managing and resolving conflicts begins at the local and regional levels and must involve all parties concerned — in particular, civil society, women, young people and the victims of violence. Ceasefire and peace agreements must be based on an inclusive approach and be acceptable to all. Reconciliation cannot be based solely on the establishment of a new order; it must also ensure that past injustices and abuses be brought before the courts and that fair compensation is provided. It is for that reason that the Secretariat should maintain regular contacts with the regional organizations and institutions concerned, so as to think these matters through together and identify best practices and innovative approaches.

Thirdly, the Department of Political Affairs should be strengthened in order that it can fulfil its mandate in the area of conflict prevention. The establishment of a Mediation Support Unit is a first and very important step towards that end. Switzerland will continue to support those efforts. However, strengthening capacities for conflict prevention, mediation and good offices alone cannot depend upon the good will of contributors. New resources in the form of assessed contributions will also be necessary. Conflict prevention should not merely be a desirable activity for the United Nations, it should have the status of a principal activity of the Organization.

Switzerland supports a strong and effective role for the Security Council in the area of conflict prevention. We also believe there is a need for a well-informed and structured debate on how to strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations in this area. We think that the time has come for the General Assembly to seriously take up this issue, during its sixty-second session, on the basis of the Secretary-General's most recent report on the prevention of armed conflict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Normandin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is pleased to participate in this debate on the prevention of conflict in Africa. We thank the President for his initiative to hold this open debate.

Situations such as those in Darfur, northern Uganda, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — in which civilians continue to suffer the effects of war — illustrate that the immediate and long-term costs of the failure to prevent armed violence, and of delaying our response to it, are incalculable. However, as we look back on our experience in the area of conflict prevention, it is important not to lose sight of the progress we have made. The *Human Security Report* has concluded that there has actually been an 80 per cent decrease in the number of armed conflicts since the 1990s. That situation is attributed to an extraordinary increase in the efforts of the international community.

Since the adoption of resolution 1625 (2005), we have created new tools to reduce the risk of conflicts breaking out and to ensure that peace agreements do not unravel once they are in place. Moreover, regional cooperation has improved — the most recent example of which is the new hybrid mission to Darfur. The Peacebuilding Commission has also been established, and Canada favours expanding its agenda to include additional States at risk as well as such cross-cutting themes as children affected by armed conflict and the role of women in peace and security.

The Mediation Support Unit is an additional tool in the area of preventive diplomacy. Canada supports and encourages the timely and proactive deployment of its capabilities.

We also encourage expanding the African Union's Council of Elders.

It is clear, however, that improved cooperation with the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations is essential if we wish to prevent conflicts in Africa.

Canada will continue to contribute to the strengthening of the peace and security architecture of the African Union, especially as regards the deployment of civilian and military monitors, regional centres of excellence for the deployment of trained military and police components to peace support operations, and the establishment of a future permanent integrated force in Africa.

Nevertheless, those efforts are not enough. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his most recent report, a significant gap remains between rhetoric on conflict prevention and the reality on the ground. The World Summit's endorsement of the responsibility to protect must now be translated into swift international action to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. That must be done both by improving the capacity of States themselves to intervene and by more speedy international efforts.

We urge the Security Council to continue to integrate cross-cutting themes into its work — especially as regards such principal causes of conflict as the proliferation of light weapons, the exploitation of natural resources, gender equality, human rights violations and challenges in protecting civilians.

We also encourage the Secretary-General to resort more frequently to the reporting functions conferred upon him by resolution 1625 (2005), as well as to inform the Security Council about increasingly worrying situations that could benefit from the Council's attention.

(*spoke in English*)

We commend the Secretary-General for his recent and timely reporting on the situation in Somalia, and encourage the Council to give that worsening situation its focused attention. Canada is deeply concerned about the situation in Somalia, including targeted attacks against journalists, and has provided substantial humanitarian assistance accordingly.

When the international community works together, much can be accomplished. Security Council cohesion is critical to overcoming the conflicts in the Sudan. The Council's strong support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and its prompt deployment of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan have at last helped to end one of Africa's longest civil wars.

With respect to Darfur, the Council's unanimous approval of resolution 1769 (2007) — authorizing the hybrid mission — "opens a new chapter", in the words of the Secretary-General. That key development has already improved the atmosphere for the peace process being led by the special envoys of the African Union and the United Nations.

We emphasize, however, that the continuing engagement of the international community is vital, both in Darfur and in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since the adoption of resolution 1556 (2004), Canada has been a core contributor to the African Union's peacekeeping mission, committing $286 million to provide critical airlift, armoured vehicles and technical advisors. Canada has also responded to the urgent appeal from the Council to assist the African Union's mission until the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur can be deployed.

Uganda is a recent example of international cooperation under United Nations leadership to reduce and prevent conflict. Canada works closely with the United Nations and other partners in northern Uganda, providing support for the Juba peace talks.

The Nairobi Summit and the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region was also the culmination of more than

three years of confidence-building and negotiation, primarily between the 11 core countries of the region. Implementation, however, remains precarious, owing to the unresolved issue of the remaining armed forces in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That requires both sustained international attention and a sustained international military presence. In this regard, Canada will continue to support implementation of the conference process through our co-chairmanship of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region.

Finally, we would like to highlight our support for the initiative of the Southern African Development Community to address the growing crisis in Zimbabwe. Given the destabilizing effects Zimbabwe's economic and governance crisis could have on the region, Canada believes that intensified regional diplomacy is required on an urgent basis. We also urge the Security Council to consider regular briefings on this steadily deteriorating situation.

In closing, we would urge the Council to use all of the conflict prevention tools at its disposal to address emerging conflicts at a much earlier stage of their development. Coordinated regional and subregional action and, most critically, the provision of timely and appropriate international support for such action, are urgently required to sustain peace. We must all do our part.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mrs. Ithete (Namibia): My delegation joins those who have spoken before us in congratulating you, Mr. President, for assuming the presidency of the Council and commends you for finding it befitting to include in your busy schedule this important debate on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The concept paper on the prevention of armed conflict that you have given us in preparation for this debate, which in our view forms a good basis for our deliberations here today, is equally commendable and we share many of the sentiments expressed.

This debate no doubt gives us ample opportunity to exchange views and devise ways on how best we can enhance the capability of the African Union and of its subregional organizations to address issues related to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

This debate has come at the right time, a time when the number of conflicts in Africa has, unfortunately, been increasing day by day, causing untold hardships, misery and suffering to ordinary citizens. About half of the world's armed conflict and some three quarters of the United Nations peacekeepers are in Africa. As we speak, there are over 6 million displaced persons in the world, approximately 3 million of whom are in Africa.

While we have always agreed that Africa must take a leading role in alleviating the predisposing factors causing conflict on the continent, we are equally aware that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with this organ, the Security Council. Regional organizations such as the African Union can play a complementary and supporting role to assist the United Nations. To this end, we appreciate the efforts being made to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations, the African Union and its subregional organizations in promoting durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

These efforts, which should include, among other things, comprehensive processes of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement, should be of a long-term nature. It is not enough to end the assistance given to conflict-engulfed countries immediately after the closure of peacekeeping missions, without taking into account underlying factors that may cause the country to relapse into the same conflict — a series of events that has occurred before in many United Nations missions. Democratically elected governments deserve to be supported and strengthened in establishing their judiciary systems, reforming their security sectors and ensuring that their ex-combatants are fully integrated into the socio-economic mainstream of society.

At the heart of most conflicts lie situations of underdevelopment and the marginalization of whole societies or sections thereof, because a hungry man is always an angry man. It goes then without saying that durable peace and conflict resolutions should be carried out through social and economic development and the equitable distribution of resources at all levels. In this regard, we are hopeful that the Peacebuilding Commission, if given adequate financial support, will fill the gap by exerting and coordinating peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in countries emerging from conflict.

Given that most conflicts in Africa affect many countries within the subregion, efforts to solve them should adopt regional and subregional approaches in order to deal with, among other things, illegal cross-border activities, including the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons, which fuel and exacerbate such conflicts. The availability of such small arms and light weapons and the failure of Member States to agree in 2005 on a legally binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace these weapons in a timely and reliable manner have not helped the situation either. There is scant hope of solving the deep and deadly problems that beset Africa when arms are cheap and readily available.

While welcoming all endeavours undertaken to resolve armed conflicts, we would like to underscore that greater investment should be made in conflict prevention, which we believe is cost-effective in saving lives and financial resources. It is important that we strive to establish an early warning system that will enable us to detect and arrest situations quickly before the real conflict starts.

In conclusion, we should all strive for peace to prevail while learning to better manage and resolve conflicts and, most importantly, prevent new ones from breaking out. We all share the responsibility for one another's security — all nations, not just those in the African Union. Only by working to make each other secure can we hope to achieve security and lasting peace in Africa or anywhere else in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Conflict prevention is a core responsibility of the United Nations. The Security Council has a central role in conflict prevention and in acting to resolve conflicts that could not be avoided. Asking ourselves in this forum if we are doing enough to address such a serious and complex matter is a most important undertaking, for it provides us with the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of our action. In this regard, I thank and congratulate the Congolese presidency for proposing this debate, which will certainly add value to our thinking and action.

Argentina has followed the subject with particular interest, especially over the last two years, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. In line with that responsibility, it has constructively and actively participated in debates and discussions relating to the prevention of armed conflict. The commitment of Argentina to the establishment and maintenance of peace, especially in Africa, is given concrete expression in its current participation in four peacebuilding missions. Our contribution to the present debate is thus rooted in a deep sense that we are further fulfilling that commitment.

Resolution 1625 (2005) aims at strengthening the effectiveness of the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, particularly in Africa, by means of a wide range of actions. Coordinating these actions with the work of the Secretariat and the Economic and Social Council is the key to its operationalization.

The Secretary-General, in his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891), proposes a culture of prevention based on three vectors or dimensions and renders a clear and forceful evaluation of the capabilities of the United Nations and its family of organizations in the realm of conflict prevention. In addition, the culture of prevention is also consolidated as a shared value among Member States starting with the 2005 World Summit.

In order to achieve prevention on any of these three fronts, there is a need for a shared vision and close coordination between the central players that through their respective competencies work together in each case. The Secretary-General therefore proposes a methodology based on six categories of action that require the coordinated work of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the different organizations of the United Nations family and the regional organizations.

Similarly, the United Nations needs support in order to elaborate a strategic vision of what the Organization as a whole can achieve in preventing conflict, and it is here that the African Union, which acts on behalf of the United Nations and offers the valuable resource of its proximity to and understanding of the conflicts, plays a central role in prevention. The Economic and Social Council, likewise, through its analysis, contributes to an understanding of the context and the assessment of the crisis risk. Both actors constitute early warning and action resources for the prevention of conflicts.

It is appropriate to ask ourselves whether or not articulation of thought and action among so many

valuable actors and the Security Council is effective enough to guarantee the maximum possible degree of prevention.

The centre of gravity in this debate must be the institutionalization of the best relationship possible between the Security Council and all entities participating in prevention of armed conflict. This institutionalization, we believe, must be oriented towards defining roles, formalizing functions and designing working methods — in short, aligning resources for the most effective prevention.

We must set up processes for learning from the valuable experiences that have come from the establishment by the Security Council of the Integrated Offices of the United Nations in Sierra Leone and Burundi. We also look forward to the development of the work of the Secretariat's Mediation Support Unit and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission. The lessons learned must be transformed into agreements, methods and programmes that lead to a formalization of this model of action in order to disseminate it to other countries and regions.

The Security Council, meanwhile, should renew its vision of prevention and functionally transform itself into the central node of an early warning and action network for the prevention of armed conflict. Relationships and functions must be specified, tried and improved.

We must blend a vision with activities and avoid duplication of effort or loss of effectiveness due to a lack of method or poor agreement in details. In this sense, the African Union, as a central and close actor, not only needs to be sure that it will have the financial resources it needs for its preventive action, but also that it will get the institutional resources, information and uniform procedures for early warning and the prevention of armed conflicts. Such resources must be designed by this Council as the centre of the prevention network.

This debate will allow us to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the Security Council on the issue of prevention of armed conflict. Each improvement achieved at this level will have a multiplying effect in the network. It is the start of a path we need to follow in order to align all available resources towards the objective of preventing armed conflict. It is a shared task and a tough challenge, but it is also a valuable opportunity to be more effective in the fulfilment of one of the essential responsibilities of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): We still have a number of speakers on the list for this meeting. With the agreement of members of the Council, I propose suspending the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.